

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

# JUST TRANSITION IN NATIONAL CLIMATE PLANS

An Analysis of Case Studies from South Africa,  
Costa Rica and Ukraine

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The report outlines the main principles of Just Transition and describes how Just Transition is integrated into NDCs. Just Transition integration and the actors involved are analyzed for Costa Rica, South Africa and the Ukraine.



A meaningful integration of Just Transition into NDCs calls for motivated actors, the commitment of stakeholders, building coalitions and a vision to make Just Transition a key priority



Just Transition is a long-term requirement of equity, fairness and inclusion to maintain or establish social peace in societies experiencing transformation pressure. Trade unions and CSOs have a special role to play in these debates and policies.

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Almost 30 years after the Rio Summit and the adoption of the UNFCCC, the scientific community acknowledges that climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying. Social justice concerns and Just Transition principles to deal with the social impacts of necessary climate transformation mitigation processes have featured increasingly prominently at global climate negotiations for more than a decade.



The report sketches the main principles governing how to integrate Just Transition in national climate plans—the so-called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It focuses in particular on the Global South. As a background, three context sections describe the link between climate regime, NDCs and Just Transition, as well as the role of CSOs and trade unions in the NDC preparation process.



By way of illustration, three country case studies from around the globe (namely, Costa Rica, South Africa and Ukraine) serve as examples of how Just Transition has been integrated into NDCs and the respective actors involved. Finally, the study provides practical recommendations on how to improve the integration of Just Transition in NDCs and their preparation processes that focus on different levels of governance and actors, especially from the Global South.

Further information on the topic can be found here:

[www.fes.de/themenportal-die-welt-gerecht-gestalten/klimawandel-energie-und-umwelt](http://www.fes.de/themenportal-die-welt-gerecht-gestalten/klimawandel-energie-und-umwelt)

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## 1

INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Almost 30 years after the Rio Summit and the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) the scientific community acknowledges that climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying.<sup>2</sup> Emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since the second half of the nineteenth century. In the next 20 years, the global temperature is expected to reach or exceed 1.5°C of warming, the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement. In order to counteract this development, a change of direction towards strengthening the ambition of climate policies worldwide is urgently needed. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) form the cornerstone of international climate policy and have a crucial role to play in implementing the Paris Agreement. They demonstrate a country's interpretation of the challenges ahead, its level of commitment, its climate policy strategy and its capacity to induce a transformative change<sup>3</sup> domestically to ensure that global warming remains well below 2°C. Significantly greater ambition involves challenges and consequences for national policies and, above all, for their societies.

In relation to climate ambition, transformational change can be interpreted as a fundamental transformation or structural change of economies and societies as a whole that alters the interplay of institutional, cultural, social, technological, economic and ecological dimensions in order to implement climate policies compatible with achieving the 1.5°C goal. Going beyond single-sector transformation, the concept points to the relevance of a holistic approach for unlocking mitigation potentials in combination with new social practices and worldviews. The speed of the changes required is historically unprecedented. Scenarios developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) show that the later mitigation efforts are taken, the more extensive the cuts and impacts will be. If this is not taken into account from the outset, there is a danger that the effects of climate change will be unfair and unequally distributed.

Therefore, social justice concerns should be made central to all climate policy-making processes. And regarding NDCs, social justice should be integrated from the start of NDC preparation, not at a later stage when the main decisions on national climate strategies and policies, their updates and reviews are already being taken. This is mainly to ensure that climate policies and the subsequent decarbonization conform to a »Just Transition.« Just Transition principles have been increasingly discussed at global climate negotiations for more than a decade. While there has traditionally been a focus on Just Transition in industrialized countries in the Global North, in recent years there has been an increasing focus on the Global South.<sup>4</sup> But discussions often remain abstract and progress in developing common understandings of Just Transition at the theoretical level has been rather slow. At the same time, many activities to cope with transformation challenges are not necessarily being conducted under a Just Transition banner. Moreover, there appears to be a conflict over the definition of Just Transition, for example replacing the central role from workers by a focus on »communities« or generally stakeholders. Hence the particular roles of stakeholders in the Just Transition process need to be clarified. And not least, Just Transition could be used by some to »greenwash« policies.

The NDC preparation process has a crucial role to play in triggering the ideas and the necessary steps from the global level to national policies, and vice versa. From an actor-centered perspective, the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs), trade unions and other stakeholders within the countries is a key factor in this process.

This study aims to explain the link between ambitious and transformative NDC formulation and implementation, on the one hand, and socially just climate policies in the context of a Just Transition, on the other. Target groups are governments and their administrations involved in NDC preparation, but also other stakeholders in the NDC preparation processes, especially CSOs and trade unions.

1 The authors are grateful for the case study insights provided by the experts interviewed and for reviewers' comments on earlier versions of the report. The responsibility remains with the authors.

2 IPCC (2021) Climate change: widespread, rapid and intensifying. Press release (2021/17/PR) August 9, 2021. Geneva: IPCC

3 Mersmann, F. and Wehnert, T. (2014) Shifting paradigms: Unpacking transformation for climate action.

4 Union to Union and Just Transition Center (2021a) Just Transition in the international development cooperation context. Report. [https://www.uniontounion.org/justtransition\\_eng](https://www.uniontounion.org/justtransition_eng) (accessed 3.9.2021). FES Friedrich Ebert Stiftung und Social Europe (eds) (2020) Just Transition. A Social Route to Sustainability. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/16265.pdf> (accessed 3.8.2021). Hirsch, T., Matthes, M. and J. Fünfgelt (2017). Guiding Principles & Lessons Learnt For a Just Energy Transition in the Global South. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

The study sketches out the main principles governing how to integrate Just Transition in NDCs and has a particular focus on the Global South. Setting the scene, the background section on NDCs and Just Transition focuses on three aspects: (i) the Paris Agreement, NDCs and climate ambition; (ii) the integration of Just Transition principles in the NDCs; and (iii) CSO and trade union involvement in the NDC process. By way of illustration, three country case studies from around the globe (namely, Costa Rica, South Africa and Ukraine) will serve as examples of how Just Transition has been integrated into NDCs and the respective actors involved. Finally, the study provides practical recommendations for several actors especially from countries in the Global South.

## 2

## NDCS AND JUST TRANSITION

A growing number of NDCs mention Just Transition in varying degrees of detail. The main objective of NDCs is to promote climate ambition. Just Transition has not yet emerged as a second main concept and continues to play a minor role in NDC preparation. The following sections

- provide a brief overview of the Paris Agreement, NDCs and climate ambition in general,
- summarize Just Transition principles and how Just Transition has been addressed in climate negotiations, and
- point to the role of CSOs and trade unions in the NDC preparation process.

### 2.1 PARIS AGREEMENT, NDCS AND CLIMATE AMBITION

The objective of the Paris Agreement is to limit global warming to well below 2°C and preferably to a maximum of 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this, greenhouse gas emissions should reach a global peak as soon as possible and have to be rapidly reduced thereafter. Moreover, climate neutrality should be achieved worldwide by mid-century. Bringing these goals to life requires fundamental economic and social transformations of all countries worldwide. Corresponding global mitigation pathways have been described in the IPCC's »Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C«.<sup>5</sup>

The NDCs constitute the backbone of the Paris Agreement. The countries themselves prepare, communicate and maintain what actions they undertake to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to contribute to the Paris climate goal. They are also supposed to determine what actions they will take to enhance resilience and the ability to adapt to climate impacts. NDCs encompass a multitude of efforts by each country and should reflect its highest possible climate ambition. A key principle is to continuously stimulate climate ambition so that countries do not backslide from self-determined targets.<sup>6</sup> As NDCs have to be submitted every five years, the general idea is to strengthen the cli-

mate ambition of the NDCs through updates of the mitigation contributions. At the same time, the »global stocktake« reviews and makes transparent what has been achieved globally to implement the Paris Agreement goal.

A first NDC-milestone was the year 2020, which marked the end of the first five-year cycle of the Paris Agreement. By then, new or updated NDC were supposed to be submitted. However, submissions arrived gradually, not least due to the postponements in climate negotiations and to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>7</sup> Ahead of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) to be held in Glasgow in November 2021, 117 new or updated NDCs have been submitted, representing about 50.5 per cent of global emissions.<sup>8</sup> Among those, 67 countries (representing 31.8 per cent of global emissions) have submitted a more ambitious NDC with reduced total emissions compared to their previous NDC. Moreover, 48 countries (representing 30.2 per cent of global emissions) have stated their intention to enhance ambition or action in a new or updated NDC.

However, further cycles of strengthening the NDCs will be required to achieve the Paris Agreement temperature goal. The Climate Action Tracker (CAT) estimates that, in 2030,<sup>9</sup> there will be an emission gap of 20–23 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e (gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) between the levels of emissions in 2030 projected in the NDCs and those consistent with the Paris Agreement. The Gambia is the only one of the 37 countries covered by the Climate Action Tracker that has been rated as Paris Agreement compatible. Seven countries have been rated as »almost sufficient« (Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria and the United Kingdom).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> IPCC (2018). The 1.5 Special Report covers mitigation pathways compatible with 1.5° Celsius.

<sup>6</sup> UNDP and UNFCCC (2019) The heat is on. Taking Stock of Global Climate Ambition.

<sup>7</sup> Climate Watch NDC Tracker (2021) <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/2020-ndc-tracker?search=>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid Climate Watch NDC Content. 2021. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Available online at: <https://www.climatewatchdata.org>

<sup>9</sup> Climate Action tracker (2021c). The calculation of the emission gap included all new and updated NDCs announced or submitted by May 2021. <https://climateactiontracker.org/global/cat-emissions-gaps/> (accessed 17.08.2021).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/> The CATs' »Paris Agreement compatible« rating indicates that a country's climate policies and commitments are consistent with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature goal. Subsequent to the submission of new and updated NDCs in 2021, the rating of several countries is in the process of being adapted.

## 2.2 JUST TRANSITION PRINCIPLES AND CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS

The »Just Transition« approach has many roots, objectives and proponents. The origins of the concept date back to the 1990s.<sup>11</sup> New regulations in the United States to prevent air and water pollution resulted in the closure of industries. In response, US trade unions developed an early Just Transition concept.<sup>12</sup> In the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation, the term refers to country-specific structural changes in the transformation process towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient society. These are inextricably linked to issues of equity and justice,<sup>13</sup> since the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities are affected. Furthermore, Just Transition calls for inclusiveness in relation to all affected stakeholders and vulnerable groups. Some of these transformations of economic sectors regarding technologies, policies, infrastructure, social and cultural practices can be disruptive for certain parts of economies or for certain communities of workers. Thus, they are closely linked to severe changes in the numbers and types of jobs and skills required and the economic base of whole regions.

Due to the diversity of transformation challenges, Just Transition is not a »one-size fits all« approach.<sup>14</sup> Rather, Just Transition plans and strategies must be tailored to regional specificities. Generally, the need for Just Transition is greater the more a region, city or community is dependent on a carbon-intensive sector, industry, economic activity, etc. It is a precondition for the emergence of the societal acceptance and support that is required to achieve the goals set out in the Paris Agreement by marshaling societal reform capacities.

Decarbonization challenges concern all countries at all levels of governance, urban as well as rural, all economic sectors and activities and all societal groups. Most attention has traditionally been paid to the decarbonization of the energy sectors, in particular the reduction and phase-out of coal mining and decommissioning of coal-fired power plants. However, with increasing pressure towards transformation processes, societies are entering a phase that is increasingly focused on the other sectors. This is becoming clear, for example, in the automotive sector and the mobility sector in

general. Therefore, Just Transition should generally be coordinated with policy packages for transformation.<sup>15</sup> From a global perspective, considering particularly the Global South, the relevant challenges concern more than coal and fossil fuel-based economy, such as to the shift from an agricultural to an industrial-manufacturing economy, growing automation, digitalization, technological shifts (e.g., towards electric vehicles),<sup>16</sup> or shifts between different types of labor. For example, the informal economy comprises more than half of the global labor force and more than 90 per cent of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) worldwide.<sup>17</sup> Informal workers are more vulnerable to the risk of losing their livelihoods and are less likely to be unionized. Other challenges for developing countries are, especially, to create jobs rather than reskill or upskill, to establish access to energy rather than substitute fuels. That is why Just Transition concepts and processes and their integration in NDCs have to be designed according to the particular domestic social and economic circumstances of countries.<sup>18</sup> In order to achieve customized visions and policies, Just Transition policies must not be developed from the top down but should integrate the knowledge, experiences and expectation of stakeholder and vulnerable groups in a participatory and inclusive process.

Just Transition has been taken up in climate negotiations and has received continuously increasing attention since COP17 in 2011. The preamble of the Paris Agreement acknowledges that Parties should take into account the Just Transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities.

At COP24 in Poland 2018, the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration was launched. Subsequently, the Polish Government unilaterally launched two tools that should facilitate the integration of Just Transition in NDCs: A template for Just Transition commitments and a Toolbox of Just Transition Strategies.

A more inclusive approach has been taken to developing the Climate Action for Jobs initiative.<sup>19</sup> It was launched at the Climate Summit in 2019 and is being coordinated by the ILO.

<sup>11</sup> Just TransitionSmith, S. (2017) Just Transition. A report to the OECD. ITUC: Just Transition Center. <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Newell, P. and D. Mulvaney (2013) The political economy of the 'Just Transition'. *The Geographical Journal*, 2013, doi: 10.1111/geoj.12008

<sup>13</sup> Just Transition includes opportunities for achieving more gender equality. As this is not a particular focus here, more information can be found, e.g., at ILO (2017) Gender, labor and a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---ilo\\_aids/documents/publication/wcms\\_592348.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/publication/wcms_592348.pdf). FES Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2020) Further steps are needed to ensure a gender-just energy transition. <https://connect.fes.de/people/further-steps-are-needed-to-ensure-a-gender-just-energy-transition> (both accessed 8.10.2021).

<sup>14</sup> Glynn, P. J., Blachowicz, A. and Nicholls, M. (2020) Incorporating Just Transition strategies in developing country Nationally Determined Contributions. *Climate Strategies*.

<sup>15</sup> Beuermann, C., Obergassel, W. and H. Wang-Helmreich (2020) *Rundum nachhaltig - Synergien und Zielkonflikte von Klimazielen und den Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

<sup>16</sup> For the transport sector, some indications can be found at <https://www.equaltimes.org/leaving-no-one-behind-in-the-city?lang=en#YUri-S0evOQ>, <https://www.enotrans.org/article/what-would-a-just-transition-mean-for-transportation/>

<sup>17</sup> International Labour Organisation (2021) <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/themes/informal-economy/lang--en/index.htm>. Characteristics of informal work are described as: small or undefined work places, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, low levels of skills and productivity, low or irregular incomes, long working hours and lack of access to information, markets, finance, training and technology.

<sup>18</sup> Glynn, P. J., Blachowicz, A. and Nicholls, M. (2020) Incorporating Just Transition strategies in developing country Nationally Determined Contributions. *Climate Strategies*.

<sup>19</sup> ILO (n.d.) Climate Action for Jobs initiative. [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/areas-of-work/climate-change/WCMS\\_732060/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/areas-of-work/climate-change/WCMS_732060/lang--en/index.htm) (accessed 8.10.2021)



Box 1

**Colombia: Informal work in transport and the need for Just Transition<sup>20</sup>**

The bus rapid transit (BRT) system, Transmilenio, of Bogotá, Colombia, is one of the most successful BRT systems in the world. Beginning in 2000, it has been introduced in several phases. BRT is a sustainable transport solution, reducing pollution and congestion and in many regards is an example of best practices. It costs less than constructing other public transport infrastructure (metro/rail). Prior to the BRT, transport in Bogotá was provided by informal workers driving minibuses and small transport companies. Working conditions were characterized by long days, resulting in health problems, and insecure conditions.<sup>21</sup> BRT could be expected to be good for workers, substituting insecure informal with formal jobs. But it has also had significant negative impacts on employment. Estimates have shown that each formal job in BRT replaces seven jobs driving minibuses. This example illustrates the need for a Just Transition strategy. There has been no social dialogue and no effort by the government or the bus company to monitor, assess and consider the wider economic and social impacts in the planning and reform processes. Affected workers have not received support to reskill or upskill in order to gain employment in the new system or find other jobs.

## 2.3 CSO AND TRADE UNION INVOLVEMENT IN THE NDC PROCESS

Stakeholder participation can foster the integration of Just Transition as a meaningful concept into the NDCs and their future updates. Building coalitions of CSOs and other stakeholders can help to ensure that NDCs are both ambitious and socially just. Investigating how trajectories of change can be triggered by civil society<sup>25</sup> led to the following conclusions:

- Effective engagement and leadership at the local level is essential to achieving high-level NDC commitments. Analysis of the first NDCs submitted by Parties showed that they did not adequately incorporate solutions from communities at the grassroots level and thereby failed to realize the potential for a people-centered pathway to social justice.
- A bottom-up approach to building a climate strategy can increase the ambition of national climate commitments significantly, by ensuring that the voices of those involved in the actual implementation of adaptation and mitigation actions are heard.

46 countries made commitments to support a just ecological transition by formulating national plans for a Just Transition through social dialogue, creating decent work as well as green jobs. The initiative's vision is to enable ambitious climate action that delivers decent jobs and advances social justice.

Despite NDC examples covering both climate ambition and Just Transition comprehensively, concerns have emerged in the context of negotiations that a further integration might slow the pace of change.<sup>22</sup> However, more wide-ranging analyses and defenses of Just Transition focus on the enabling function of Just Transition: With greater social ambition, climate ambition will also increase. Potentially affected people feel more secure in the transition and anxiety about change is reduced, which allows for a faster pace of change.<sup>23</sup>

The NDCs must cover fairness and equity under the heading »6. How the Party considers that its NDC is fair and ambitious in the light of its national circumstances.«<sup>24</sup> No further reference to potential topics or of Just Transition need be included.

Trade unions have an important role to play in these processes. At the international level, trade union federations laid the foundations of Just Transition in the climate change and UN context, in particular with the ILO's Just Transition guidelines.<sup>26</sup> They have played a prominent role in networking and knowledge exchange, in providing advice, for example via the establishment of the Just Transition Center by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and partners, and to »bring together workers and their unions, businesses and governments in social dialogue and stakeholder engagement with communities and civil society to ensure that labor has a seat at the table when planning for a Just Transition to a low-carbon world.«<sup>27</sup> From a union perspective, a holistic Just Transition Plan<sup>28</sup>

- covers both measures for workers who may lose their jobs or livelihoods and measures to make sure that new green jobs are good jobs,
- includes provisions for managing the phase-out or transformation of high-emitting sectors and promoting the growth of low-emitting sectors with decent jobs, and
- includes measures to diversify economies and ensure that societies are more resilient to climate change impacts, as well as measures to address these impacts.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, S. (2017) Just Transition. A report to the OECD. ITUC: Just Transition Center. <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate-collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Jenkins, K. E. H. (2019) Implementing Just Transition after COP24. Climate Strategies. [https://climatestrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Implementing-Just-Transition-after-COP24\\_FINAL.pdf](https://climatestrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Implementing-Just-Transition-after-COP24_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Simon, F. (2021) Union leader: 'With more social ambition, climate ambitions will also become higher'. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/interview/union-leader-with-more-social-ambition-climate-ambitions-will-also-become-higher/>

<sup>24</sup> UNEP DTU Partnership, UNEP and NDC Action (2020) Pocket guide to NDCs. <https://unepdtu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-pocket-guide-to-ndcs.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/17325.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> International Labour Organisation (2015). Guidelines for a Just Transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. Geneva: ILO.

<sup>27</sup> Just Transition Center (2021). Who we are and what we do. <https://www.ituc-csi.org/just-transition-centre?lang=en>

<sup>28</sup> Union to Union and Just Transition Center (2021b) Just Transition in a development context. <https://www.ituc-csi.org/just-transition-in-the-international-development-cooperation-context?lang=en>

As such, Just Transition enables a pathway to social justice in a sustainable economy transition. It builds hope and trust in a future that prioritizes people and nature.<sup>29</sup> Unions want to ensure that workers' lives, wages, security of employment, health, safety and social protection are guaranteed in economic transition processes. Strong national workers' organizations negotiate at eye level with governments and employers for better working conditions and environmental standards. The role of trade unions is to ensure that the trade-offs between labor, environmental and social issues are discussed and solid proposals are developed to manage change.<sup>30</sup> Traditionally, an important union focus that is also applied to Just Transition is the principle of social dialogue. A strong and meaningful social dialogue is a bipartite or tripartite process that includes all types of negotiation, consultation and any exchange of information between governments, trade unions and employers' organizations that relate to economic and social policy and are of common interest.<sup>31</sup> Unions collectively negotiate (through collective bargaining) the working conditions of their members (wage, benefits, pensions, social protection, working conditions, safety and so forth). Social dialogue may be informal or institutionalized and takes place on the different levels (company, sector, nationally, cross-border and internationally). It may involve the social partners in different economic sectors, within a single sector or in a single company or group of companies. It differs from other participation processes in that it is not open to all stakeholders and has specific forms.

Going a step further and beyond the perspective of affected workers, a proactive structural policy opens up different perspectives for participation for the affected regions with all stakeholders – in addition to social dialogue. Resilient pathways for sustainable value chains have to be developed for the regions. Taking distribution issues and fairness into account will be crucial for securing acceptance of the transformation. A fair distribution of costs and burdens, as well as of good wages and decent work, can contribute to a positive transformation narrative. Especially in countries with high levels of inequality, Just Transition can mean a promise of more ecological, but also more social sustainability. The involvement of trade unions and social dialogue can help to realize this promise.

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**29** Carrau, N., Forero, L. and B. De Wel (2020) How can a Just Transition help protect our climate and biodiversity? Green Economy Coalition <https://www.greeneconomycoalition.org/news-and-resources/how-can-decent-work-and-quality-jobs-protect-our-climate-and-biodiversity> (accessed 5.10.2021).

**30** DGB Bildungswerk (2020) Transformation weltweit. Für Gute Arbeit im Digitalen und Ökologischen Wandel. p. 21. [https://www.dgb-bildungswerk.de/sites/default/files/media/product/files/DGB%20BW\\_NSN\\_2020\\_Transformation\\_weltweit.pdf](https://www.dgb-bildungswerk.de/sites/default/files/media/product/files/DGB%20BW_NSN_2020_Transformation_weltweit.pdf)

**31** International Labour Organisation (2021) <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/themes/s-dialogue-tripartism/lang--en/index.htm>

# 3

## CASE STUDIES ON THE INTEGRATION OF JUST TRANSITION IN NDCS

NDCs cover the countries' pledges concerning their contributions to achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal. Given the challenges described above, there is clearly a need to integrate a vision and practical information on how the countries consider and address the equity and justice implications of the strategies, policies and measures. How Just Transition has been integrated and covered in NDCs has been analyzed for three countries, Costa Rica, South Africa and Ukraine.

Why these three countries in particular? A 2020 review of 52 NDCs as regards their climate ambition, integration of Just Transition and the existence of a social dialogue showed that only 10 of them contained information on Just Transition, and only 15 contained information on social dialogue or both categories.<sup>32</sup> Costa Rica and South Africa have been chosen from these NDC scorecards either for their high level of climate ambition and longstanding coverage of Just Transition and their experience with inclusiveness and participation processes in NDC preparation. Based on a crosscheck with new and updated, as well as announced, NDCs, Ukraine was selected as a third case because it indicated a stronger NDC including Just Transition

for the first time. Moreover, Ukraine provides some insights into a debate on Just Transition under very specific and difficult conditions.

The case studies are structured along the following lines:

- a brief country profile,
- the countries' transformational challenges,
- the climate ambition of the NDC,
- the Just Transition approach of the NDC,
- inclusiveness and participation,
- a short assessment.

### 3.1 COSTA RICA

The republic of Costa Rica is bordered by Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south and has coastlines on the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. Costa Rica is a presidential democratic republic. The economy is based on tourism, agriculture and the export of electronic equipment and services. The country significantly reduced poverty during the 1950s and 1980s. Table 1 provides a brief country profile.

<sup>32</sup> The review was mainly based on first NDCs. International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) (2020) NDC Scorecards. <https://www.ituc-csi.org/scorecards-ndcs?lang=en>

<sup>33</sup> A Gini coefficient of 0.2-0.35 marks a relative income equality, a Gini coefficient of 0.5-0.7 a relative income inequality. Data from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country>

Table 1  
Country profile Costa Rica

<b>Population (2019)</b>	5,047,561 Population growth: 0,96 % p.a. 21 % living under national income poverty line
<b>GDP (per capita 2019)</b>	USD 12.244 (global rank: 58)
<b>Income distribution / Gini Coefficient<sup>33</sup></b>	0.48
<b>Greenhouse gas emissions (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	Total: 8.5 8.17 Energy 3.95 Agriculture 2.08 Waste 1.57 Industrial processes -7.27 Land Use change and forestry
<b>Key hazards</b>	Droughts, Storms, Floods, Earthquakes, Volcanic activities

Source: [Climatewatchdata.org/countries](https://climatewatchdata.org/countries)

Costa Rica is internationally respected for its leadership role in climate change mitigation. In 1990, more than 99 per cent of energy in Costa Rica was generated from renewable sources, with hydroelectricity being the largest source of energy. Already over a century ago, the country decided to use its hydro potential for energy production.<sup>34</sup> However, the largest share of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions stems from the transport sector. Over a period of twenty years (1996-2016), the country increased its annual oil consumption almost threefold (from 6,424,561 to 20,208,666 barrels).<sup>35</sup> Car density is high, with an average of 231 cars per 1000 inhabitants.<sup>36</sup> Costa Rica's economy is characterized by a hyper-concentration of activities in the greater metropolitan area (GAM). About a third of the population in Costa Rica lives in this area, which is also notorious for its traffic congestion. Therefore, the government of Costa Rica has made modernization of the transport sector one of its priorities.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL CHALLENGES

The National Decarbonization Plan describes the country as a »decarbonization laboratory.«<sup>37</sup> The plan outlines Costa Rica's approach to decarbonize the economy to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Apart from transportation, the main challenges facing Costa Rica will be to achieve a significant increase in blue and green jobs and to implement a green fiscal reform. According to the World Bank, persistent inequalities and the fiscal situation are the biggest challenges the country currently faces.<sup>38</sup> Addressing unemployment and underemployment by creating decent work is vital to ensuring the progress and impact of a Just Transition. Likewise, the country must promote and implement a fiscal reform aimed at economic revival that promotes good production practices and new consumption patterns.

## CLIMATE AMBITION OF THE NDC

In its updated NDC, submitted at the end of 2020, Costa Rica presents a new maximum absolute net emissions target

of 9.11 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent).<sup>39</sup> This is a slightly more stringent mitigation commitment than the previous maximum of 9.37 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e. According to the Climate Action Tracker, Costa Rica remains 2°C compatible.<sup>40</sup>

## JUST TRANSITION APPROACH

Costa Rica made climate justice and Just Transition a cross-cutting element of its updated NDC. It is often characterized as a best case for a just energy transition.<sup>41</sup> The country considers Just Transition as »a process of the entire economy that produces the plans, policies and investments that lead to a future in which all jobs are green and decent, net emissions are zero, poverty has been eradicated and communities are prosperous and resilient.« The NDC dedicates a whole section on the topic of Just Transition, describing it as an enabling condition for the implementation of an ambitious NDC. The NDC demonstrates the country's efforts to search for synergies between the climate and sustainable development agenda. The NDC text shows whether a specific activity also benefits other agendas by presenting a list of icons of those agendas below the text. There is also a specific icon for Just Transition.

The country has identified people with disabilities, transgender people, the elderly, women and youth and children, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities as among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The updated NDC devotes special attention to gender issues. It states that »by 2022, there will be at least one study on the risks and impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, with special attention to impacts differentiated by gender.«<sup>42</sup> In addition, the country foresees beginning to implement a gender equality and climate change action plan in 2022. This will include training and capacity building from an intersectional perspective for institutions that work with climate change, and in particular for decision makers working directly with the population, regarding the differentiated impact of climate change by gender condition on women and sexually diverse populations, and especially on historically excluded populations. Costa Rica also plans to establish a monitoring system involving indicators to guarantee gender equality and the empowerment

<sup>34</sup> Government of Costa Rica (2015): Costa Rica's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution. <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Costa%20Rica%20First/INDC%20Costa%20Rica%20Version%202%200%20final%20ENG.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021).

<sup>35</sup> Government of Costa Rica (2019): National Decarbonization Plan. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NationalDecarbonizationPlan.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021).

<sup>36</sup> The Costa Rica Star (21.11.2018): Costa Rica is the third country in Latin America with highest car density. <https://news.co.cr/costa-rica-is-the-third-country-in-latin-america-with-highest-car-density/77499/> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>37</sup> Government of Costa Rica (2019): National Decarbonization Plan. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NationalDecarbonizationPlan.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>38</sup> The World Bank (2021): The World Bank in Costa Rica. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/costarica/overview> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>39</sup> Government of Costa Rica (2020): NDC 2020. <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Costa%20Rica%20First/Contribucion%CC%81n%20Nacionalmente%20Determinada%20de%20Costa%20Rica%202020%20-%20Versio%CC%81n%20Completa.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>40</sup> Climate Action Tracker (2021a): Costa Rica <https://climateaction-tracker.org/climate-target-update-tracker/costa-rica/> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>41</sup> FES (2017): Guiding Principles & Lessons Learnt for a Just Energy Transition in the Global South. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/13955.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>42</sup> Government of Costa Rica (2020): NDC 2020. <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Costa%20Rica%20First/Contribucion%CC%81n%20Nacionalmente%20Determinada%20de%20Costa%20Rica%202020%20-%20Versio%CC%81n%20Completa.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021)

of the Afro-descendant community, organized women's groups, young people, the transsexual community, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and women and older people regarding climate change-related actions.<sup>43</sup>

## PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVENESS

The NDC update was developed based on quantitative information (climate action models) and qualitative elements (explorative scenarios on the future of Costa Rica to 2050). According to the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), 150 leading actors from the public sector, private sector, civil society, academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were invited to take part in the creation of exploratory scenarios.<sup>44</sup> The workshops were held online. In a second step, over 300 people were invited to contribute to workshops on the formulation of recommendations. These workshops were organized in accordance with five thematic clusters. Stakeholders representing the sectors incorporated in the NDC explored and described the possible implications for their sectors, based on the country's multiple future scenarios created in the previous phase of the consultation process. They then analyzed how feasible it is to achieve climate goals through existing climate policies within the context of the future scenarios, and provided recommendations to increase their robustness. A detailed summary of the process can be found on the website of the Ministry.<sup>45</sup>

The Ministry shared a first draft of the NDC update with the general public at the end of November 2020. A series of discussion with communities and groups vulnerable to the climate crisis and who do lack strong representation in decision-making spaces was organized in November and December. A summary of the comments from the consultation process can be found on the website of the Climate Change Directorate. A first version of the NDC was already presented to UNFCCC while comments of the public consultation were still being processed. Subsequently, the second version incorporating the comments of the consultation process was presented on December 28, 2020.

Costa Rica has set up consultative bodies in recent years. In 2017, it established the Scientific Council on Climate Change (4C) as an independent, consultative body comprising academics, researchers and experts to advise the government on scientific research and technological development in the area of climate change. Its task is to produce reports commissioned by the Ministry of Environment and Energy but it can also raise issues related to its purpose.<sup>46</sup> A

second council, Costa Ricans Citizens' Climate Change Advisory Council, also known as 5C, was created in the same year as a platform for citizen participation. It aims to contribute to the formulation and application of national climate change policies, in particular the implementation of the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution. Both councils ensure greater involvement in the decision-making process of actors who have not been centrally involved in the past.

By 2022, Costa Rica aims to establish a »continuous, iterative and inclusive process,« called the »National Cycle of Ambition.« This inclusive process is intended take into account different worldviews and perspectives and the latest scientific findings. Special efforts will be made to include the groups most vulnerable to climate change. Through this process, the NDC and the long-term strategy shall be monitored and updated.

There is little information on the participation of trade unions in the NDC preparation process. ITUC and trade unions had been participating in pre-meetings of ministers in advance of COP25. Acknowledging the comprehensive Just Transition approach of the country, ITUC pointed to the relevance of a social dialogue with workers and their unions to ensure trust in Just Transition measures.<sup>47</sup> Although the ITUC took part in pre-meetings, it did not have any exchanges with the Costa Rican government on their NDC.

## JUST TRANSITION MEASURES PROPOSED IN THE NDC

Costa Rica is in the process of developing policies and institutions to implement the Just Transition agenda. In early 2021, Costa Rica published its Territorial Economic Strategy, which focuses on developing the peripheral areas of the country. Since most economic activities are concentrated in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) and the capital city of San José, the strategy focuses on further developing 11 regional hubs. While the Northern Zone, for instance, is supposed become an area for culture tourism, the city of Liberia is supposed become a renewable energy cluster. The overall vision of the strategy is that Costa Rica should become a decentralized, digitized and decarbonized economy by 2050. In addition, Costa Rica states in its NDC that it intends to prepare action plans for the six socio-economic regions by 2022 in a participatory manner.

The country also plans to develop a Just Transition Strategy by 2024. The strategy will be accompanied by a National Green Jobs Policy. Mechanisms will be put in place to estimate green and blue employment and to assess how climate action will impact employment and vulnerable groups. The aim of these measures is to anticipate potential changes in occupational demand. Specific training pro-

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 50

<sup>44</sup> Ministerio Ambiente y Energía – Costa Rica (2021): NDC de Costa Rica. <https://cambiodiomatico.go.cr/contribucion-nacionalmente-terminada-ndc-de-costa-rica/proceso-de-escenarios-narrativos-de-la-ndc-2020/> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> LSE (2021): Costa Rica. Decree No. 40615 creating the Scientific Council on Climate Change. <https://www.climate-laws.org/geographies/costa-rica/policies/decreo-no-40615-creating-the-scientific-council-on-climate-change> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>47</sup> ITUC (2019) Just Transition key to Costa Rica's plan for zero emissions by 2050. <https://www.ituc-csi.org/Just-Transition-Costa-Rica-0-Emissions?lang=en>



grams focusing on women, young people, Afro-descendants, indigenous people, and other groups historically excluded from the labor sector will facilitate access to green jobs.

Furthermore, Costa Rica states in its NDC its intention to integrate Just Transition into its education policy by reviewing the education curricula in schools and universities and by creating citizen education programs.

Costa Rica's NDC also includes new forms of cooperation among the government. A Just Transition Governance Scheme will establish a Working Commission for Dialogue Processes and Joint Actions promoting social dialogue between representatives of the government, employers and workers, as well as broader social dialogue. The scheme will be led by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion (MDHS) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS). Costa Rica also wants to establish an Interministerial Technical Council on Climate Change in which the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) and the Ministry of Culture and Youth (MCJ) will work together.

## ASSESSMENT

Costa Rica is a frontrunner in implementing Just Transition principles in its NDC and in taking them as a blueprint to guide the country's transformation. Just Transition has become part of the countries' development plan envisaging the creation of new economic centers and of green and blue jobs. The country benefits from its energy sector based on renewable sources. Although a broad participatory process with stakeholders and vulnerable groups has been established, the role of trade unions and social dialogue in these processes has not been particularly prominent or clear. Other supporting factors were that Just Transition was integrated in strategic policy planning at an early stage: In the National Decarbonization Plan, submitted to the UNFCCC in 2019 as Costa Rica's long-term strategy, Just Transition already appears numerous times as a cross-cutting issue.<sup>48</sup> The elaboration of the plan was led by the Minister of Environment and Energy, with the support of national and international consultants. In addition, the country benefited from the support of the UNDP NDC support program between 2017 and December 2022.<sup>49</sup>

Costa Rica was among the 46 countries that made a commitment at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in 2019 to place jobs at the heart of ambitious climate action

and to promote Just Transition. Silvia Lara, Minister of Labor and Social Security, Costa Rica is currently a member of the International Advisory Board of the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative, spearheaded by the ILO. Among the members of the Advisory Board are ministers from other countries, leaders of employers' and workers' organizations and senior officials of the UN and development finance institutions. The initiative was launched at COP25 by the UN Secretary General, the ILO Director-General, government leaders and the International Organization of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation.

Among the factors that supported the incorporation of Just Transition, was a genuine and widespread interest by actors in the economic sectors. A need and interest on the part of certain sectors to adapt their ways of working and to advance in new forms of sustainable production and consumption helped to ensure that resistance to including Just Transition principles in the NDC was virtually non-existent.

## 3.2 SOUTH AFRICA

The Republic of South Africa is located at the southern tip of Africa and has a total land area of 1,219,602 km<sup>2</sup>. Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) has governed the South African state in an alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which is the largest Trade Union in South Africa. Table 2 provides a brief country profile. Access to inexpensive coal has greatly contributed to the country's development in the past. Today, coal is still by far the largest energy source for South Africa, accounting for about 77 per cent of South Africa's primary energy needs.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the energy sector alone is responsible for about 80 per cent of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>51</sup> The coal-fired power plants and the industries in the coal value chain are concentrated in the north-east of the country.

## TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGES

The transformation of the energy system is an urgent challenge not only because of the high emission intensity, but also because of the structural, operational and financial difficulties of the sector.

In 2019, color-coded 87.2 per cent of the electricity generated in the country, followed by other sources (7.9 %) and renewables (4.9 %). Eskom, South Africa's state-owned power

<sup>48</sup> Government of Costa Rica (2019): National Decarbonization Plan. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NationalDecarbonizationPlan.pdf> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>49</sup> UNDP NDC Support Programme (2021): <https://www.ndcs.undp.org/content/ndc-support-programme/en/home/our-work/geographic/latin-america-and-caribbean/CostaRica.html> (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>50</sup> Department: Mineral Resources and Energy (2021): Coal Resources [http://www.energy.gov.za/files/coal\\_frame.html#:~:text=Internationally%2C%20coal%20is%20the%20most,needs%20are%20provided%20by%20coal](http://www.energy.gov.za/files/coal_frame.html#:~:text=Internationally%2C%20coal%20is%20the%20most,needs%20are%20provided%20by%20coal) (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>51</sup> Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (2019): Integrated Resource Plan. <http://www.energy.gov.za/files/media/Pub/IRP-2019.pdf> (accessed 04.08.2021)

Table 2  
Country profile South Africa

<b>Population (2019)</b>	5,047,561 Population growth: 0,96 % p.a. 21 % living under national income poverty line
<b>GDP (per capita 2019)</b>	USD 6,001 (global rank: 93)
<b>Income distribution / Gini Coefficient</b>	0.63
<b>Greenhouse gas emissions (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	Total: 520.50 436.10 Energy 30.03 Agriculture 24.84 Waste 22.48 Industrial processes 7.07 Land Use change and forestry
<b>Key hazards</b>	Droughts, Storms, Floods, Earthquakes, Epidemics, Wildfires

Source: [Climatewatchdata.org/countries](https://climatewatchdata.org/countries)

er utility generates around 90 per cent of the electricity in the country. It describes itself as the »lifeblood of the South African economy.«<sup>52</sup> The country faces regular power outages due to disruptions in electricity generation caused by a lack of maintenance leading to supply shortages. Eskom had to implement load shedding to prevent total blackouts on 46 days in 2020.<sup>53</sup>

Even without ambitious decarbonization policies, employment in the energy sector in South Africa will decline as power plants and mines reach the end of their lifetime.<sup>54</sup> The decommissioning of old plants in the future will result in a pressing need for additional capacity. Eskom expects that 12,000 MW of coal-fired capacity will shut down by 2030 and additional existing coal-fired power stations will be retired between 2030 and 2050.<sup>55</sup> Eskom already indicates that it will not be able to redeploy all affected employees from one coal supply or generation community to another area.

Eskom is highly indebted and is not able to invest in new generation capacity.<sup>56</sup> This is also a reason why South Africa has introduced a Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Program (REIPPPP)<sup>57</sup> already

in 2011 to allow more private investment in the energy sector. A number of reforms were announced, one of which—announced in May, 2019—aims at unbundling Eskom into three wholly state-owned entities responsible for generation, transmission and distribution respectively. The existing structure of ESKOM was deemed to be inefficient, costly, untransparent and not fit for purpose in a changing energy landscape.<sup>58</sup> However, South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, has also made clear that he does not wish to privatize the energy sector. He considers public ownership necessary to ensure the supply of public goods such as electricity and water.<sup>59</sup> While in 2019, approximately 85 per cent of households in South Africa were connected to electricity supply, energy poverty is still a significant challenge.<sup>60</sup> Given the high levels of unemployment, inequality and poverty in the country, a move away from coal raises fears about the socio-economic impacts among workers and communities in coal-dependent areas.

## CLIMATE AMBITION IN THE NDC

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment released a draft of South Africa's updated NDC in March 2021 for public consultation. The country plans to submit the updated NDC to the UNFCCC prior to the COP26. The update strengthens South Africa's climate target compared to the previous NDC from 2016. South Africa's previous NDC target is expressed as an absolute emissions level in the range of 398–614 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (incl. Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry [LULUCF]) over the period 2025–2030.

<sup>52</sup> Eskom (2020): Integrated Report. [https://www.eskom.co.za/OurCompany/Investors/IntegratedReports/Pages/Annual\\_State-ments.aspx](https://www.eskom.co.za/OurCompany/Investors/IntegratedReports/Pages/Annual_State-ments.aspx) (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> SEI (2019): The end of coal? Planning a »Just Transition« in South Africa. <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/planning-a-just-transition-in-south-africa.pdf> (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>55</sup> South Africa (2020): Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS). <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/South%20Africa%27s%20Low%20Emission%20Development%20Strategy.pdf> (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>56</sup> South African Government (2021): From the desk of the President. <https://www.gov.za/blog/desk-president-73> (accessed 05.08.2021)

<sup>57</sup> NDC Partnership (2016) South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme. <https://ndcpartnership.org/case-study/south-africa%E2%80%99s-renewable-energy-independent-power-producer-procurement-programme> (accessed 20.10.2021).

<sup>58</sup> South African Government (2021): From the desk of the President. <https://www.gov.za/blog/desk-president-73> (accessed 05.08.2021)

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> South Africa (2020): Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS). <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/South%20Africa%27s%20Low%20Emission%20Development%20Strategy.pdf> (accessed 04.08.2021) and Statistics South Africa (2018): Energy and the poor: a municipal breakdown. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=11181> (accessed 05.08.2021)

In its updated NDC draft, South Africa has lowered the upper limit. Now, the country proposes to restrict absolute emissions levels to the range of 398–440 MtCO<sub>2e</sub> (incl. LU-LUCF) by 2030.

## JUST TRANSITION APPROACH

According to South Africa's draft updated NDC, Just Transition means leaving no one behind. It describes Just Transition as »core« for a more sustainable, low carbon and climate-resilient development that provides better life for all. The updated draft NDC states: »Ensuring that no one is left behind as we move from a high GHG [greenhouse gas] emission, low-employment energy development pathway to a low emission, climate-resilient and job-rich pathway, is central to our national work on development and climate change.« The goals linked to this Just Transition strategy are a shift to low-carbon technology, minimizing adverse impacts on communities, workers and the economy while maximizing benefits.

## JUST TRANSITION MEASURES PROPOSED IN NDC

Just Transition measures mentioned in the draft updated NDC aim to reconcile development and climate protection. The country foresees, among other things, reskilling the workforce, providing incentives for new green sectors, diversifying regional economies that depend on coal and developing labor and social plans for people affected by a future decommissioning of coal-fired power plants.

However, this remains vague, given that South Africa's updated NDC does not mention any specific policy measures in the area of Just Transition. Whereas a Just Transition plan is still to be finalized, the draft document highlights the need for international support. The NDC is informed by the »Low Emission Development Strategy 2050.«<sup>61</sup> The strategy mentions that two key policy instruments are being developed to manage a Just Transition: the National Employment Vulnerability Assessment, and Sector Jobs Resilience Plans.<sup>62</sup> The low-emission development strategy as well as the NDC update remains rather vague and do not state any specific targets with a fixed time frame. A Climate Change Bill is due to be finalized in 2021. It will establish, among other things, sectoral emissions targets.

<sup>61</sup> South Africa (2020): Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS). <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/South%20Africa%27s%20Low%20Emission%20Development%20Strategy.pdf> (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>62</sup> TIPS (2020): Sector Jobs Resilience Plan: National Employment Vulnerability Assessment - Analysis of potential climate-change related impacts and vulnerable groups. <https://www.tips.org.za/research-archive/sustainable-growth/green-economy-2/item/3988-sector-jobs-resilience-plan-national-employment-vulnerability-assessment-analysis-of-potential-climate-change-related-impacts-and-vulnerable-groups> (accessed 05.08.2021)

## PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVENESS

South Africa's draft updated NDC states that Just Transition »requires procedural equity to lead to equitable outcomes.« After publishing the draft updated NDC, South Africa called on all stakeholders to participate in the consultation process in April and May 2021. After the stakeholder consultation, the updated NDC was revised, submitted to Cabinet for approval and will be made public before the COP26. Due to COVID-19 most consultations had to be virtual. On its website, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) announced that there would be virtual consultation with other government departments, virtual consultation with broader stakeholders through the National Committee on Climate Change (NCCC) and targeted virtual consultations with interest groups, such as representatives from various sectors, civil society and labor. In addition, a schedule for multi-stakeholder workshops in the nine provinces was published on the website of the department.

Stakeholders were also able to engage with Just Transition matters before and during the preparation of the NDC update. The updated NDC builds on the work of the National Planning Commission (NPC) which that according to the draft NDC had undertaken extensive consultations over two years to develop a draft »2050 Vision and Pathways for a Just Transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society.« In 2017, the NPC launched a »Social Partner Dialogue for a Just Transition« as a basis for delivering the Just Transition chapter in South Africa's National Development Plan. Four social partners (government, labor (unions), civil society and business) participated and the dialogues concluded in May 2019.<sup>63</sup> Based on this process, the country will develop a Just Transition Plan. In addition, the government has established the Presidential Climate Change Commission as an advisory body following a Job Summit in 2018 to facilitate dialogue between social partners on Just Transition. The Commission was set up to represent government, business, civil society and trade unions and is responsible for developing a policy framework to guide the country in implementing a Just Transition. As part of this, the Commission will host a series of public dialogues on key issues relating to climate justice.<sup>64</sup> The Commission's first activity was engagement on the draft NDC update. In June 2021, the Commission published recommendations on South Africa's draft updated NDC and recommended a more ambitious climate target, among other things.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> World Resources Institute (n.d.) South Africa: Strong Foundations for a Just Transition. <https://www.wri.org/just-transitions/south-africa> (accessed 8.10.2021).

<sup>64</sup> Presidential Climate Commission (2021a): About us. <https://www.climatecommission.org.za/about-3> (accessed 05.08.2021)

<sup>65</sup> The Presidential Climate Commission (2021b): First report. [https://a9322a19-efe3-4459-9a6c-ab806fededa3.filesusr.com/ugd/1eb85a\\_896d0493b6284743b2ff3986b36be622.pdf](https://a9322a19-efe3-4459-9a6c-ab806fededa3.filesusr.com/ugd/1eb85a_896d0493b6284743b2ff3986b36be622.pdf) (accessed 05.08.2021)



## ASSESSMENT

South Africa took up Just Transition at a very early date, and already integrated it into its first NDC in 2016. The debate around a Just Transition was initiated by trade unions. COSATU promoted the concept of Just Transition and called for the participation and leadership of organized labor. It appears that hosting the COP17 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2011 generated momentum for a public debate on how South Africa would be able to transition from a largely coal-dependent economy to a low-carbon society. Given the long-standing discussion on the issue, however, the coverage in the draft updated NDC is still rather vague, although since 2011 the Just Transition concept has been incorporated into numerous national policies and plans. One of the first policy documents to reflect Just Transition principles was the first national development plan in 2012. It presented a long-term vision for the country and mainly aimed at eliminating poverty and reducing inequality by 2030.<sup>66</sup> It states that »over the long term, with realistic, bold strategies and global partnerships, South Africa can manage the transition to a low-carbon economy at a pace consistent with government’s public pledges, without harming jobs or competitiveness.«

Since the submission of the first NDC in 2016, the principles linked to Just Transition have been increasingly operationalized through policies and plans. The country’s Low Emission Development Strategy 2050, for instance, suggests three phases of a Just Transition and provides a list of short, medium and long-term activities.<sup>67</sup>

The NDC preparation process is a good example of inclusiveness and participation. Generally, the practice of consultation processes between the government, business, trade unions and community associations is well established and longstanding. The mission of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) established in 1994 is to »ensure effective public participation in labour-market and socio-economic policy and legislation, and to facilitate consensus and cooperation between social partners in dealing with South Africa’s socio-economic challenges.«<sup>68</sup>

Trade unions have been actively involved in the process of integrating Just Transition into climate change policy. The close link between trade unions and the ruling party helped to ensure that due attention was paid to the issue of Just Transition. The South African trade union centers COSATU,

FEDUSA and NACTU<sup>69</sup> are affiliated with ITUC, which developed the Just Transition concept at the international level. Starting the discussion in 2011, the inclusion of Just Transition concerns met with widespread public acceptance. As early as 2011, COSATU, published a booklet entitled »A Just Transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.« There were no objections to integrating the concept in principle into the first NDC.

However, once specific targets and measures were proposed, different possible interpretations became more apparent. It appears that trade unions had some difficulty in finding common positions and are torn between protecting coal interests and greater climate ambition. Most of them are opposed to the privatization of the energy sector, fearing higher electricity prices, and some argue for the introduction of a socially owned renewable sector. There are also concerns about the capability of renewable energy to provide jobs and about dependence on foreign technologies.

## 3.3 UKRAINE

Ukraine is a lower-middle-income country in Eastern Europe. With a land area of over 600,000 km<sup>2</sup>, it is the second-largest country in Europe. Ukraine became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 2014, Ukraine signed an Association Agreement<sup>70</sup> with the EU. It entered into force in 2017 and a follow-up process is ongoing, with a review of achievements due in 2021. In 2014, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and a separatist conflict in the old-industrialized eastern Donets Basin (Donbas) led to the proclamation of a »people’s republic« in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The armed conflict, also known as the Russo-Ukrainian War, is ongoing with major impacts on the country.<sup>71</sup>

Between 1990 and 2000, Ukraine experienced a dramatic economic downturn with a sharp decrease in GDP to 40 per cent of 1990 levels, resulting in a poorer population. Since then, GDP has increased to 64 per cent of 1990 levels. A decoupling of GDP and greenhouse gas emissions was observed after 2000 as emissions continued to fall. In the period 1990-2019, greenhouse gas emissions in Ukraine decreased to about 38 per cent of 1990 levels. The economy is dominated by industry (including mining, construction, electricity, water and gas) and agriculture sectors. Table 3 provides a brief country profile.

<sup>66</sup> National Planning Commission (2012): National Development Plan. <https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/Executive%20Summary-NDP%202030%20-%20Our%20future%20-%20make%20it%20work.pdf> (accessed 05.08.2021)

<sup>67</sup> South Africa (2020): Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS). <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/South%20Africa%27s%20Low%20Emission%20Development%20Strategy.pdf> (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>68</sup> National Economic Development and Labour Council (2021): About us. <https://nedlac.org.za/> (accessed 04.08.2021)

<sup>69</sup> Respectively, the Federation of Unions of South Africa and the National Council of Trade Unions.

<sup>70</sup> Mission of Ukraine to the European Union (2021): EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. <https://ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/en/2633-relations/ugoda-pro-asociaciyu-mizh-ukrayinoyu-ta-yes> (accessed 4.9.2021).

<sup>71</sup> The Economic Times (2021) Explained: What’s behind the conflict in eastern Ukraine. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/explained-whats-behind-the-conflict-in-eastern-ukraine/articleshow/82101803.cms> (accessed 4.9.2021).

Table 3  
Country profile Ukraine

<b>Population (2019)</b>	44.1 Mio Population growth: -0.53 per cent per annum, negative since 2020 1.1 per cent living under national income poverty line
<b>GDP (per capita 2019)</b>	USD 3,656 (global rank: 115)
<b>Income distribution / Gini Coefficient</b>	0.26
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions/unit GDP (kgCO<sub>2</sub>/ USD constant 2010 PPP GDP)</b>	0.52 (global rank: 4)
<b>Greenhouse gas emissions (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	Total: 262.43 220.88 Energy 30.19 Agriculture 14.46 Waste 8.98 Industrial processes -12.08 Land Use change and forestry
<b>Key hazards</b>	Storms, Floods, Epidemics, Extreme Temperatures

Source: Climatewatchdata.org/countries, World Bank (2021)<sup>72</sup>

## TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGES

The Ukrainian Government describes transformational challenges for all sectors in its decarbonization strategy,<sup>73</sup> including the following:

First, restructuring the energy sector, substituting fossil fuel-powered plants with renewable-based ones in the electricity and heat sectors, modernizing, but also phasing out aging or obsolete infrastructure. The restructuring will be backed by the operation of existing nuclear power plants. At the same time, Ukraine has currently more capacity installed than it needs. Technically, phasing out coal-fired generation by 2030 appears achievable without threatening the security of power supply.<sup>74</sup> The strategic closing of coal mines has been decided, since only 4 out of 33 operating mines are even marginally profitable. The coal sector is heavily dependent on public subsidies. More than half of the Ukrainian mines are located in the occupied regions and hence are not under the direct control of the authorities. Second, economic impacts and challenges regarding and labor market: Assessments of the long-term economic impacts of the transition to renewable energy in the energy sector are pos-

itive, but attracting new investment and mobilizing large volumes of investment are required. As for net macroeconomic effects, it has been assessed that 55,000 jobs in mining and power generation will be lost. The job creation potential regarding the renewables sector has been assessed as almost three times higher (160,000 jobs).<sup>75</sup> Since coal-related industries are concentrated in a few regions, however, the regional distribution of losses and the creation of new jobs could lead to severe disturbances on the labor market. Around 38,000 workers are directly employed in mining industries and about 60 cities with approximately one million residents depend on coal industries.

## CLIMATE AMBITION OF THE NDC

Ukraine submitted an updated NDC on July 31, 2021. The updated target of a 65 per cent reduction (incl. LULUCF) below 1990 levels by 2030 is a significant improvement compared to the previous target of at least a 40 per cent reduction below 1990 levels by 2030. However, it must be borne in mind that the old target was almost completely accounted for by historic emission reductions. The new target proposes an emission level of 323 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e compared to 544 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e under the previous NDC target. The goals of the updated NDC come with the proviso that the Government has limited control over the occupied regions. The analytical assessment of the sectors that served as the basis of the updated target concludes an increase of emissions by 2030 for some sectors, e.g., transport.

The Ukrainian climate neutrality goal has also been strengthened since the target year is now 2060 (instead of 2070). According to the assessment of the Climate Action Tracker, the updated target could be achieved or surpassed with the planned measures, which correlate with a projected emissions level of 275 to 379 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (ex-

<sup>72</sup> The World Bank (n.d.): <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/ukraine> (accessed 03.08.2021)

<sup>73</sup> Government of Ukraine (2021a) Analytical Review of the updated Nationally Determined Contribution of Ukraine to the Paris Agreement. [https://mepr.gov.ua/files/images/2021/29042021/Analytical%20Report\\_%20Project\\_EN.PDF](https://mepr.gov.ua/files/images/2021/29042021/Analytical%20Report_%20Project_EN.PDF) (accessed 23.8.2021)  
Other transformation challenges assessed are: (i) Modernization and increase of energy efficiency of the building sector. Reversing a trend from centralized heating systems to individual heat supply systems. (ii) A switch to electric vehicles and development of relevant infrastructure. Beyond a slow fuel switch process, a particular challenge is that an increase in passenger cars is expected. All in all, greenhouse gas emissions from passenger car transport are expected to increase by 21 percent by the year 2030. (iii) Industry sector modernization, basically improving energy efficiency. Challenges for the sectors agriculture, LULUCF and waste have been also described.

<sup>74</sup> Probst, B., Sabaka, I., Mykhailenko, O., and Preuß, M. (2021) The economic implications of phasing out coal in Ukraine by 2030. Kyiv: Heinrich Böll Foundation, p. 85.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 66 f.

cluding LULUCF) in 2030. The updated NDC has not yet been finally rated by the Climate Action Tracker. Currently implemented policies do not suffice, because it is estimated that they would result in an emissions level of between 403 and 434 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030.<sup>76</sup>

## JUST TRANSITION CONCEPT AND MEASURES IN NDC

The term »Just Transition« occurs several times in the NDC but, in the absence of a definition or interpretation, its implications remains vague. The Just Transition focus is on Ukrainian coal regions. It is noted that reducing greenhouse gases has a significant social aspect associated with Just Transition of coal regions as well as thermal energy generation. Under the NDC heading, »How the Party considers that its NDC is fair and ambitious in light of its national circumstances,« it is stated, that for a successful implementation of the NDC, the Government of Ukraine must support the necessary energy sector transformation in several ways, among others by overcoming the energy poverty of consumers, through a significant increase in the share of electricity and heat production from renewable sources and full-scale implementation of the program on Just Transition of coal regions and reduction of emissions from large combustion plants, as well as generation of nuclear energy (50 per cent of the primary energy supply) with an option to build new units.

## PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVENESS

The NDC of Ukraine states that the NDC preparation process was characterized by inclusiveness and openness for discussion and comment through the involvement of stakeholders and the public at all stages. Environmental and climate topics have become more important for CSOs following the ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2016. CSOs had an opportunity to comment on draft laws, strategies and plans related to climate and environmental issues and could participate in consultations and meetings.<sup>77</sup> A case study on participation in climate policies in Ukraine concludes that »both government officials and CSOs believe that the opportunities for cooperation in the field of climate policy have slightly increased over the past few years.«<sup>78</sup> The Government began the NDC review process 2018 in cooperation with a team of national and international experts provided through the technical support of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development project »Support to the Government of Ukraine on Updating its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC),« which was funded by the Government of Sweden. A Working

Group was established by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine to ensure public participation and transparency. It included representatives from all relevant ministries, parliamentary committees, scientific institutions, business associations and NGOs. The Working Group met five times between February 2019 and November 2020. Participants presented and collected comments on the input data, methodologies selected, preliminary modeling results and final documents. Reports and submitted statements were published on the website of the Ministry with open public access. It is not clear whether Just Transition was explicitly discussed in the meetings. CSOs included a very brief mention of »Fair Transition« in their »Roadmap Climate Goals for Ukraine 2030« published in 2020 in the context of the NDC preparation.<sup>79</sup>

## JUST TRANSITION MEASURES PROPOSED

The NDC mentions the full-scale implementation of the program on Just Transition for coal regions. The program is not described further in the NDC. The Ministry of Territories and Communities Development and the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry have been commissioned to develop the program by the end of 2021; an interim report was published in 2020.<sup>80</sup> According to that, the general objective of the program is the development of the state in a socially, humanly, economically, ecologically, environmentally and environmentally friendly way. Specifically, the focus will be on the »Socio-Economic Transformation of Territories Undergoing the Phase Out of Coal Mining and Processing.« Key components of the program are investment development in coal mining areas, social support for miners, proactive policy in the labor market, diversification of the local economy, as well as a comfortable environment and development of mining towns and cities. The interim report makes no explicit reference to Just Transition or fair transition. Social dialogue or stakeholder participation is not mentioned; trade unions and other stakeholders are only mentioned in context of the program's general communication strategy.

## ASSESSMENT

The updated NDC of Ukraine includes only a few sentences on Just Transition. Just Transition did not play a major role in the preparation process. However, it appeared in some form on the government's agenda over the past years<sup>81</sup> and is basically understood as an issue affecting the

<sup>76</sup> Climate Action Tracker (2021b) Ukraine. <https://climateactiontracker.org/climate-target-update-tracker/ukraine/>

<sup>77</sup> Donges et. al, 2020, p. 123. For example, 30 CSOs are organized in the Ukrainian Climate Network (UCN).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> N.A. (2020) Roadmap Climate Goals for Ukraine 2030. <https://en.ecoaction.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/roadmap2030-ecoaction-booklet-full-eng.pdf> (accessed 7.9.2021).

<sup>80</sup> N.A., n.d.. [https://www.minregion.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/coalindustry\\_transformation\\_blue.pdf](https://www.minregion.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/coalindustry_transformation_blue.pdf). (Development of a National Program of Transformation Coal Regions of Ukraine until 2027, translated with deepL)

<sup>81</sup> Bogushenko A., Koval-Honchar M., and K. Krynytskyi (2020) The Future of a Just Transition in Ukraine. Perceptions in Coal Mining Towns. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

coal mining regions. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal stressed that the envisaged transformation of coal regions is not a matter of closing mines but of creating new industries, developing the social sphere, infrastructure and the transition to a decarbonized economy.<sup>82</sup> However, that should be the ambition for all sectoral goals outlined in the NDC and the related analytical report. A Coordination Centre for the Transformation of Coal Regions established by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2020 involves the participation of government officials, state administrators, members of parliament, coal mining company officials, trade unions, and local government associations. The issues discussed include social security in coal mining towns and new directions for local economies and the generation of jobs. Pilot projects are planned for two mining cities.<sup>83</sup> The NDC mentions a coal region related Just Transition Program under development but the interim report of the program does not mention Just Transition and does not outline social dialogue or strong participation. Just Transition does not seem to feature in the public debate but some CSOs stress the need for a Just Transition and highlight the potential benefits. A key obstacle to a Just Transition appears to be a low level of trust in government promises.<sup>84</sup>

The legal framework for public participation in environmental policy making in Ukraine has been assessed as being quite extensive and complex, although not all international provisions have been implemented nationally.<sup>85</sup> Several CSOs participated in the NDC preparation meetings but criticized the process for not being ambitious enough and, in response, developed a CSO Roadmap Climate Goals for Ukraine 2030.<sup>86</sup> The Roadmap follows a sectoral approach and does not include a call for Just Transition.

The Federation of Transport Workers of Ukraine submitted a statement on the transport-related chapter of the analytical review on which the updated NDC was based. Just Transition was not mentioned but the projections regarding the growth of the electric vehicle fleet were criticized in particular as be-

ing too optimistic.<sup>87</sup> Participation of other trade unions in the NDC preparation process has not been identified. »Just Transition« seems not to be a well-known concept. Generally speaking, trade unions in the mining sector were seen by local residents as being dependent on company management and local authorities, with little scope for influencing developments or protecting the interests of the citizens and towns.<sup>88</sup> There are some indications that trade unions are beginning to focus increasingly on Just Transition: Trade unions released a resolution calling for a »fair transition« in 2020 and they are participating in the government's Coordination Centre for the Transformation of Coal Regions. However, it must be borne in mind that trade unions are under particular pressure since there is an ongoing debate about violations of trade union rights by government.<sup>89</sup> They point to a systematic violation of obligations under ILO Conventions and the European Social Charter. As a result, the conditions for social dialogue in a Just Transition context are not very favorable.

Whereas until now Ukrainian government documents and statements and the updated NDC have not contained much information on Just Transition, there are some drivers that could have an impact on understanding and integrating a more holistic Just Transition approach in government strategies and policies in future NDC-related processes:

In 2020, the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources published Ukraine's »2050 Green Energy Transition Concept« with the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2070.<sup>90</sup> However, this »Ukrainian Green Deal« focuses on sectoral transformation, but does not mention Just Transition and only addresses social issues very marginally. Based on the updated NDC that moves the climate neutrality goal forward to 2060, Ukraine plans to engage with the EU Green Deal, which includes the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM). April 2021 marked the beginning of the EU-Ukrainian Dialogue on the EU Green Deal,<sup>91</sup> which should enhance cooperation in many ways, for example, on Just Transition in coal regions. In the context of the EU Green Deal discussion,

<sup>82</sup> Government of Ukraine (2021b) Press release 06.07.2021. Prime Minister: Fair transformation of coal regions means the creation of new opportunities for community members and employees of enterprises. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/premyer-ministr-spravedliwa-transformaciya-vugilnih-regioniv-ce-stvorennya-novih-mozhливостей-dlya-zhiteliv-gromad-i-pracivnikov-pidpriyemstv> (accessed 5.9.2021).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Bogushenko A., Koval-Honchar M., and K. Krynytskyi (2020) The Future of a Just Transition in Ukraine. Perceptions in Coal Mining Towns. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

<sup>85</sup> Donges, L., Stolpe, F., Sperfeld, F., Kovac, S. (2020): Civic space for participation in climate policies in Colombia, Georgia and Ukraine – The example of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Independent Institute for Environmental Issues. Berlin. The authors identify as key obstacle to meaningful participation that the political will for participatory governance is not very strong among high-level decision-makers and particularly environmental organizations have less political weight as compared to other lobby groups (p. 39).

<sup>86</sup> Ecoaction (2021) Vision of Ecoaction on the roadmap for Ukraine's participation in the EU Green Deal. [https://en.ecoaction.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ecoaction-vision-greendeal\\_s.pdf](https://en.ecoaction.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ecoaction-vision-greendeal_s.pdf) (accessed 6.9.2021).

<sup>87</sup> <https://mepr.gov.ua/files/images/2021/29042021/%D0%A4%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%96%D1%8F%20%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%B2%D1%86%D1%96%D0%B2%20%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%82%D1%83.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> Bogushenko A., Koval-Honchar M., and K. Krynytskyi (2020) The Future of a Just Transition in Ukraine. Perceptions in Coal Mining Towns. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

<sup>89</sup> ETUC (2021) European trade unions urge EU to implement Ukraine commitments. <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/european-trade-unions-urge-eu-implement-ukraine-commitments>

<sup>90</sup> Government of Ukraine (2020) 2050 Green Energy Transition Concept [https://mepr.gov.ua/files/images/news\\_2020/14022020/eng\\_pdf\\_%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%B-F%D1%86%D1%96%D1%8F%20\(1\).pdf](https://mepr.gov.ua/files/images/news_2020/14022020/eng_pdf_%D0%B7%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%B-F%D1%86%D1%96%D1%8F%20(1).pdf)

<sup>91</sup> European External Action Service (2021) Press release 19.05.2021. First meeting of focused dialogue between the EU and Ukraine on the EU Green Deal and Ukraine Green Transition. [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/98719/перша-зустріч-у-рамках-спеціального-діалогу-між-україною-та-євросоюзом-щодо-європейської\\_uk](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/98719/перша-зустріч-у-рамках-спеціального-діалогу-між-україною-та-євросоюзом-щодо-європейської_uk) (accessed 3.9.2021).

Ecoaction, a Ukrainian CSO, calls for developing, adopting and implementing national, regional and local Just Transition programs for coal mining regions and towns. These programs should be developed in broad consultations with local government, civic society, businesses, academia, etc., and consider their interests.<sup>92</sup> So there is a chance that these processes could lead to more inclusion and participation in the future.

Ukraine participates in international coal sector-related initiatives and programs. In September 2019, the Platform Initiative for Coal Regions in the Western Balkans and Ukraine<sup>93</sup> was established under the leadership of the European Commission and the World Bank. It builds on the experiences of the EU's Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition. The Platform Initiative is based on the concepts of inclusion, stakeholder engagement and Just Transition, which rely on broad stakeholder consultations and dialogue in coal regions, as well as with national government and private sector actors. Trade unions and social partners are primary stakeholders involved in the Platform Initiative. However, CSOs call for broader participation rights that go beyond trade union involvement and include other stakeholders, such as climate activists, environmental NGOs, etc.<sup>94</sup> In Ukraine, the participation of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Lviv and Volyn regions is subject to severe restrictions due to the occupation. One aim is to share examples of how Just Transition initiatives promote the exchange of knowledge, strategy development, and project identification to assist coal regions in their energy transition. Subsequently in October 2020, Poland's National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (NFEP&WM) and the World Bank, in cooperation with the European Commission, launched an initiative to facilitate an exchange of knowledge between coal regions in Poland and Ukraine. It aims to share the extensive experience gained in the Just Transition process in Poland (exchange at city level) so that a bottom-up knowledge base can develop at regional level.

Already in May 2019, mayors of six coal monotowns in Donetsk Oblast, three NGOs from the region, and the Donetsk Chamber of Commerce and Industry established the Platform for Sustainable Development of Coal<sup>95</sup> which has a focus on Just Transition.

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<sup>92</sup> Ecoaction (2021) Vision of Ecoaction on the roadmap for Ukraine's participation in the EU Green Deal. [https://en.ecoaction.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ecoaction-vision-greendeal\\_s.pdf](https://en.ecoaction.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ecoaction-vision-greendeal_s.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> European Commission (2021) Initiative for coal regions in transition in the Western Balkans and Ukraine [https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/coal-regions-in-the-western-balkans-and-ukraine/initiative-coal-regions-transition-western-balkans-and-ukraine\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/coal-regions-in-the-western-balkans-and-ukraine/initiative-coal-regions-transition-western-balkans-and-ukraine_en) (accessed 5.9.2021).

<sup>94</sup> Bankwatch (2020) Joint Position. Four principles for a participatory Just Transition in the Western Balkans and Ukraine. <https://bankwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/position-JT-WB-UA.pdf>. Their conclusion is that the participation of trade unions from day one is essential, as they represent the workers for whom new employment must be designed. Sectoral restructuring decisions without their consultation would undermine their position in the regions.

<sup>95</sup> Platform for Sustainable Development (n.d.) <https://justtransition.org.ua/en/main-en/#focus> (accessed 3.9.2021).



## 4

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on Just Transition literature and the case studies. The objective is to provide some practical information on how to support the integration of Just Transition in NDCs at different levels. Recommendations are addressed to both policy maker and stakeholder at different governance levels. Cooperation between the different levels and actors, between the state, regions, local communities, trade unions, is needed to develop and apply an ambitious Just Transition concept in transformation regions.

## AT THE UN LEVEL

## 1. INTEGRATE JUST TRANSITION IN THE NDC TEMPLATE

At the moment there are little provisions in the NDC regulation. Just Transition complements climate ambition since it represents the social element, i.e., the other side of the coin of transformation processes. It is an enabling element of socially sound NDC preparation and implementation and an important mechanism and precondition for securing domestic support.<sup>96</sup> This is ultimately a matter of expanding the NDC mandate beyond information on mitigation-related contributions. Acknowledging the complexity of climate negotiations, Just Transition should be explicitly included in the NDC guidance on issues that might be addressed in NDCs. Integration in the NDC Information to facilitate Clarity, Transparency and Understanding would help to

- increase visibility of Just Transition in general,
- clarify the principles of a holistic Just Transition concept,
- highlight the relevance of addressing Just Transition in the NDC preparation process, and
- provide a basis for exchange on country-specific approaches and best practice.

Other actors call, for example, for a separate chapter on a Just Transition Plan or on labor impacts and strategy.<sup>97</sup> Considering the Silesia Declaration and Just Transitions toolbox could facilitate the integration in the NDC template.

<sup>96</sup> Jenkins, K. E. H. (2019), p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> Solidarity and Just Transition. Report by the COP24 presidency. [https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/KONFERENCJA\\_JT/Just\\_transition\\_E-BOOK.pdf](https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/KONFERENCJA_JT/Just_transition_E-BOOK.pdf)

Governments, for example signatories of the Silesia Declaration, CSOs and trade union confederations should continue to advocate a more comprehensive integration of Just Transition provisions in NDCs. This could involve

- Does the country have a Just Transition plan?
- What are the main Just Transition issues and policies?
- Is there a social dialogue?
- How do CSO participate?

## AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL

## 2. MAKE JUST TRANSITION A KEY PRIORITY AT HIGH-LEVEL POSITIONS

Establish a high-level advocate of Just Transition in government. For example, the Scottish Just Transition Commission proposed that the next Scottish government should make the Deputy First Minister—or at a minimum, a Cabinet Secretary—responsible for a Just Transition to net zero emissions in order to ensure that Just Transition becomes a key organizing principle embedded across government for climate policy-making in the country.<sup>98</sup>

## 3. DEVELOP A COUNTRY-SPECIFIC VISION OF JUST TRANSITION

Decarbonization strategies are country specific. The impacts of transformation processes on the workforce, indirectly affected groups in the communities and vulnerable groups are also country specific. The use of Just Transition language as a slogan will not suffice to develop a shared understanding what Just Transition objectives and goals involve. A vague general interpretation undermines the motivation of stakeholders to participate actively. Governments have to establish processes to develop a country-specific Just Transition vision, strategy and plan. These can be integrated in the country's NDC and should provide answers to the following questions:

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/>

- What does Just Transition mean taking account of the characteristics of the country?
- What CSOs and trade unions should participate in the discourse on a Just Transition vision?
- How is social dialogue implemented? Governments have to engage with social partners, especially trade unions, on the development of Just Transition policies and measures. That is a precondition for a successful Just Transition process on the ground.
- Are new institutions required to organize the process, such as a committee, etc.?

#### 4. ALIGN THE JUST TRANSITION PROCESS WITH THE NDC PREPARATION PROCESS AND LINK THE AGENDAS

Inclusive participation processes are essential preconditions for the integration of Just Transition in national policies as well as in NDCs. They must consider the following recommendations:

- Consider the timing of the participation process.
- Make use of longstanding experience with consultation processes (if there is any) and use them for NDC preparation.
- Identify major transformation challenges resulting from mitigation policies regarding regional concentration of industries, mono-sector dependency of regions, implications of transformation for formal and informal work, vulnerable groups, etc.
- Widen the scope of analytical background studies on which NDCs are based to address Just Transition more systematically, e.g., by including a complementary subchapter.

### AT THE LEVEL OF TRADE UNIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

#### 5. USE THE MOMENTUM OF EVENTS TO PROMOTE JUST TRANSITION

This is a very general recommendation to promote the discussion in the course of international events that have a potential to generate momentum for Just Transition. For example, the COP in Durban in 2011 pressed South Africa to begin developing its Just Transition policies. Events at the national level, taking stock of the Just Transition plans and their implementation could be linked, for example, to the Global Stocktake cycle of the Paris Agreement reviewing collective efforts (and ambition) towards achieving the Paris goal.

#### 6. NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS SHOULD MAKE JUST TRANSITION A KEY PRIORITY AND BUILD COALITIONS

Trade unions should develop a holistic view of transformation processes and a Just Transition taking account of the trans-

formation challenges in the country. Unions should promote economic diversification. An exclusive focus on job losses in individual sectors represented by a union is too short-sighted. Regional development linked to a Just Transition process should be a priority in addition to job security. Organizational structures might hinder engagement for or in Just Transition as, e.g., when workers losing jobs in the transformation process are represented by one union, but workers in sectors where jobs are created are represented by other unions or are not represented by organized labor at all. Apart from the sectoral or industry branch representation, trade unions should adopt a holistic approach to an affected region.

However, adopting such a regional perspective presents a challenge and might be beyond the scope of a union representing workers from a specific branch. The solution is a double role that is already taken in many cases but could be promoted more generally. On the one hand, trade unions can utilize their organizational structures, including a differentiation of responsibilities and tasks across different levels (from international to local), to strengthen the capacities and holistic view at the regional and local levels. It is important to differentiate between different types of unions. A mining union has a different responsibility compared with a national unions center. Knowledge building and information sharing already take place across union levels but could be intensified further.

On the other hand, trade unions could build cross-sectoral coalitions or coalitions with CSOs and other stakeholders. Building alliances with stakeholders with shared objectives can advance the Just Transition agendas at regional level, since social, economic and environmental issues have to be addressed there at the same time. That does not mean that participatory approaches should be mingled. Social dialogue is complementary to other inclusive participation processes. It is an important process in a Just Transition, but it has its limitations because it only covers formal work and excludes other stakeholders. Social dialogue is an important specific element in Just Transition, since bargaining processes between social partners to safeguard workers' rights are different from stakeholder participation processes during NDC preparation. However, representing workforce interests and integrating their perspectives is certainly a key role for trade unions in these broader stakeholder processes.

#### 7. CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES FOR TRADE UNIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Knowledge on Just Transition is often unavailable but is required to enable active participation in social dialogue and inclusive consultation processes. It is also necessary for identifying the critical issues of a Just Transition for the respective productive sector.

- Available information networks and tools could be used, e.g., from ILO, international trade union federations, the Just Transition Center, etc.

- Capacity building can take place in the communities or via online platforms.
- Capacity building could take the form of South-South cooperation or peer-to-peer exchange.

## AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

### 8. INCLUDE THE VISIONS AND PLANS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Regions and residents should have a say in Just Transition. Often, they are already dealing with it and developing strategies for restructuring of regions without using the label »Just Transition.« These approaches have to be included in the national processes.

Regions themselves benefit from exchanges with and the networks of other regions or cities that have experiences with Just Transition. A regional or local Just Transition process can support or complement a country's Just Transition policy or compensate for the lack of a national initiative. As in the Ukrainian case, where cities set up their own networks and take part in the EU Platform initiative

- cities/regions could establish or participate in existing Just Transition networks, contributing regional knowledge to support and promote knowledge exchange and mutual learning, and
- they could take part in regional, bilateral support programs to exchange knowledge.



## 5

## CONCLUSION

A simple NDC search of the new and updated NDCs in 2021 showed that »Just Transition« was mentioned by 79 of 197 countries.<sup>99</sup> In the light of the COP26 in Glasgow, this could point to a stronger emphasis on Just Transition in the new and updated NDCs. But without a closer examination, it remains speculative whether this indicates the integration of a holistic approach or reflects instead the more widespread use of a currently fashionable phrase. Especially actors who are not keen on social justice, organized labor, unions, etc., will be inclined to use or paint it as a »fashionable phrase.« There can be no doubt, however, that Just Transition has been taken up by a number of countries in a longstanding process and with best practice examples regarding several economic sectors or activities. Yet, it is clear that social and climate justice concerns, as well as the participation of all relevant stakeholders, need to be at the core of the concept in order to achieve a meaningful Just Transition process.

The case studies of Costa Rica and South Africa demonstrate that the integration of Just Transition principles in domestic policies and meaningful consideration in NDCs calls for motivated actors, the engagement of stakeholders, building of coalitions and having a vision to make Just Transition a key development priority for their country. Social dialogue is a specific institutionalized form of bargaining that is complemented by other forms of stakeholder participation, not least because it is necessary in the long term to consider equity, fairness and inclusion in order to maintain or establish social peace in societies experiencing transformation pressure. It seems that the Just Transition concept and principles are still not clear to all countries and actors. For other countries, the rather less-defined integration of Just Transition in the updated NDC, as in the case of Ukraine, is a very first step to align (improved) climate ambition with equity, inclusion and participation.

More important than short-term stakeholder consultation are longstanding fora of exchange between government, business, trade unions, and affected or vulnerable people. In this regard, the case of Ukraine shows that existing participation opportunities have to be seized by stakeholders and that mutual confidence in procedures and institutions is a precondition for meaningful outcomes. The cases further il-

lustrates that conducting a public discourse on Just Transition represents a challenge. Moreover, the perception of stakeholders of the concept and policies needed for its implementation might change over time. Stakeholders can be »enablers,« with the result that Just Transition is integrated in the NDC; but certain stakeholders might face challenges to persist in playing that enabling role during implementation. In South Africa, trade unions advocated the issue from a very early date but conflicts of interest appeared to make it more difficult to find common positions between different priorities when it came to the implementation of policies.

Knowledge exchange on best practice, networking and coalition building supports the integration of Just Transition in national policies and in NDCs. It takes place at different governance levels, for example via bilateral, regional exchange programs and formats and the use of multilateral programs. The COP also has a role to play in providing platforms of exchange and generating momentum.

The COP brings governments, business, trade unions and civil society together, whether virtually or in person. That is a window of opportunity to exchange on Just Transition and to emphasize that the concept could enable countries to develop an even more ambitious climate policy.

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ndcs-explore>

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>BRT</b>	Bus Rapid Transit
<b>CAT</b>	Climate Action Tracker
<b>C</b>	Celsius
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	Carbon Dioxide
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>COSATU</b>	Congress of South African Trade Unions
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DFFE</b>	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
<b>ETUC</b>	European Trade Union Confederation
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FEDUSA</b>	Federation of Unions of South Africa
<b>GAM</b>	Greater Metropolitan Area
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse gas
<b>Gt</b>	Gigaton
<b>GtCO<sub>2e</sub></b>	Gigatonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent
<b>ICTU</b>	Information to facilitate Clarity, Transparency and Understanding
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>ITUC</b>	International Trade Union Confederation
<b>LULUCF</b>	Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
<b>MCJ</b>	Ministry of Culture and Youth
<b>MDHS</b>	Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion
<b>MEP</b>	Ministry of Public Education
<b>MINAE</b>	Ministry of Environment and Energy
<b>MSE</b>	Micro and Small Enterprise
<b>Mt</b>	Mega ton
<b>MtCO<sub>2e</sub></b>	million tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent
<b>MTSS</b>	Ministry of Labor and Social Security
<b>NACTU</b>	National Council of Trade Unions
<b>NCCC</b>	National Committee on Climate Change
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contribution
<b>NEDLAC</b>	National Economic Development and Labour Council
<b>NFEP&amp;WM</b>	National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management
<b>NPC</b>	National Planning Commission
<b>PA</b>	Paris Agreement
<b>REIPPPP</b>	Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Program
<b>SACP</b>	South African Communist Party
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>US</b>	United States

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## GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN POLITICS

The Department of Global and European Policy provides advice on key European and international policy issues to policymakers, trade unions and civil society organizations in Germany, Brussels and at the UN offices in Geneva and New York. We identify areas of transformation, formulate concrete alternatives and support our partners in forging alliances to implement them. In doing so, we reflect on national as well as European and international policy. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its far-reaching political claim to promote a social-ecological transformation provides a clear orienting framework for pursuing our work.

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